

Paper #44264

Active planning: How to use focus groups and environmental scans to plan a community-based physical activity program

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Focus groups are beneficial because they permit the program planner to collect qualitative data directly from the target population. In the summer of 2001, the Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section (CPNS) of the California Department of Health Services, funded by the USDA, began a series of formative research projects to develop a social marketing campaign incorporating physical activity with nutrition education using the social-ecological model. Six focus groups with low-income mothers were conducted in the Oakland, Los Angeles, and Riverside regions of California (two in each area in Spanish and English languages). The women discussed the benefits and barriers of PA; and also responded to sample marketing messages incorporating PA and nutrition. Environmental scans were conducted for the same regions using ESRI's Arcview mapping program and other qualitative research methods.

Combining the results of the two methods allowed the existing pilot interventions to address individual and overarching community needs. For example, women in the more urban regions were more motivated and resourceful about being physically active than those in the suburban regions. The environmental scans

demonstrated that the urban regions scored higher on a walkability scale. In addition, many women from all regions mentioned that recreation facilities were not viewed as places for them to be physically active, only their children. Taking this information into account, while scanning the regional maps, provided communities with valuable planning information.

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Program Selection: Public Health Education and Health Promotion

Topic Selection: Community involvement in health education (participatory research, lay health advisor programs, partnerships, consumer health issues, etc.)

Learning Objectives: At the conclusion of the session the participants should be able to:
1. Identify the steps involved in conducting a successful focus group. 2. Conduct an environmental scan of a targeted community. 3. Describe/Interpret results of focus groups and environmental scans in order to plan a physical activity (PA)/nutrition integration program.

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Comments to Organizer: Please accept as Panel Presentation- Active Planning in California #3. Thank you.

Presentation Format: Oral Only

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